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## SPOTLIGHT: DISPATCHES FROM KABUL

by Col Chris Crane, CSTC-A

**2013 - A delegation of senior officers from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) went to Moscow for a “lessons learned” conference on Afghanistan.** Near the end of the conference, after several days of meetings on the best ways to depart Afghanistan, Russian General of the Army Makhmut Gareev spoke. Gen Gareev is the former Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR, and the last military advisor to President Mohammad Najibullah, Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (1989-91). Gen Gareev focused on three main points:

- You must take Afghanistan as it is ... not as you would like it to be
- If you wish to understand and influence the Afghan Army, you must have advisors down to the Kandak (battalion) level
- The lifeblood of the Afghan Army is the funding NATO provides

The Afghan Army collapsed in the 1990s, six months after Russian funding was cut off to the Afghan Government due to the failure of the Soviet Union.

**2014 –** In meetings with the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), the newly elected Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, asked for three things:

- The Resolute Support legacy to Afghanistan will not be guns and ammo, but the systems and processes NATO leaves behind
- Help to make the Army and police more affordable
- Help to retain the support for International Community funding

**2016 –** Money continues to be the center of gravity for the Afghan National Defense Security Force (ANDSF) today. In theater, CSTC-A CJ8 is the guardian of that center of gravity. CJ8 professionals, a joint, multi-national team of military, civilians, and contractors, engage daily with ➤



CJ8 audit teams in the field working with our Afghan partners

# SPOTLIGHT: DISPATCHES FROM KABUL *(cont.)*



Afghans and coalition partners, both in Afghanistan and back in the US, to maximize funding to field a sustainable, effective, and affordable ANDSF. The coalition depends on three main funding streams to support this effort:

- The Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), for which the United States is the sole contributor. In FY16, the appropriated ASFF amount was \$3.652 billion, down from highs nearing \$10 billion
- The NATO Afghan National Army Trust Fund (NATF), made up of international contributions from over 30 countries
- The Law and Order Trust Fund – Afghanistan (LOTFA), managed by the United Nations Development Program, primarily set up to fund Afghan police force salaries

These three elements support over 90 percent of the cost to operate the ANDSF, with the remaining balance paid for by the Afghan government. The overarching challenge is to synchronize these funding streams with multiple stakeholders from around the world.

In 2015, the financial processes developed and enforced for the ANDSF, along with the budgets produced for both the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI), were truly historic achievements. For the first time, the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA), the

coalition, and the international donor community participated in an integrated Afghan program/budget development process. The final result of this effort was not only the first integrated budget submission for both ministries, but also brought about a dramatically improved Afghan operational capacity, which increased international donor confidence.

With the assistance of CSTC-A advisors, the Afghans, for the first time, created a prioritized list of requirements within a financially constrained environment, which ultimately resulted in the Afghan Budget Circular-2 submission to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) [Think President's Budget submission to the Office of Management and Budget]. This product also served as the basis for the coalition's ANDSF **COMMITMENT LETTER**, as well as the ASFF POM17-21 build. Aimed at building capacity, we integrated our Afghan partners into the Program Objective Memorandum (POM) build process, so they could see firsthand the requirements planned for them by the coalition, but not executed by the Afghans. The critical insights the Afghans gained are enabling our advising efforts as they plan, program, budget, and execute their own budgets.

For our POM process, integrating the multiple funding streams is essential. Requirement owners can be sneaky by seeking multiple funding streams for the same requirement. In some cases, this has caused frustration for donor countries since they like to see their taxpayer money used effectively, just as we do. We deliberately aligned each requirement with a funding source. ➤



Engaging with our donor partners on the execution of the NATO Afghan National Army Trust Fund

## SPOTLIGHT: DISPATCHES FROM KABUL (cont.)



This enabled maximum use of available funding, while minimizing capability gaps which could have arisen otherwise.


Leveraging the insight gained from our POM database, we successfully engaged with more than 30 donor countries and received unanimous approval of the \$476 million 2016 NATO ANA Trust Fund

Implementation Plan. Delivered on target and on time, the plan was hailed for our transparent approach in the building process. As part of the program build, CJ8 personnel organized and facilitated engagements with ambassadors and the Afghan Ministries to provide strategic coherence and coordination. This high-level engagement is essential since countries will be asked to

continue donating funds to support the ANDSF from 2018 to 2020 at the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July 2016. Without maintaining donor confidence, the level of support will likely decrease significantly.

At the same time, CJ8 also has to ensure that the US ASFF is managed properly. Since ASFF is a two-year appropriation, we provide oversight and are executing over \$7 billion at any given time to train, equip, and sustain 352,000 ANDSF members. This includes everything from fielding A-29 Close Air Support aircraft and MD-530 helicopters, to procuring up-armored HMMWVs, to securing fuel and medical supplies. Everything needed to enable the ANDSF to defend their country.

To articulate how funding is being used, the CJ8 audit team conducts oversight and transparency reviews, providing requisite assurance that ASFF and the NATO Trust Fund are appropriately expended, in accordance with formal agreements between the coalition and the Afghan security ministries. In 2015, the team reported 85 recommendations for improvement to critical areas, such as medical materiel management, Afghan soldier and police pay, telecommunication purchases, and acquisition practices. The reports also identified numerous instances of misuse of coalition funds, resulting in greater than \$38 million being returned to the treasury. These reports strengthened internal controls, improving the accountability of funding streams, and assured donors that there is adequate oversight of their funding contributions.

If called upon to serve in CSTC-A, you become part of an international team that is building the Afghanistan of the future. Every FM skill set is required: operation and maintenance, accounting, cost analysis, acquisition, programming, decision support, and the list goes on. The financial processes developed and the legacy of training, advising, and assisting our Afghan counterparts with those financial processes will not only ensure a successful future for the ANDSF, but will continue to build donor confidence. As we continue along this critical path, we will help ensure the ANDSF further develop into institutions that employ sound financial processes and serve as the standard bearers for all of Afghanistan. 



Our Afghan partners kicking off their equivalent of the Program Objective Memorandum (POM)

### About the Author

*Col Chris Crane is serving as the Director CJ8, Programs and Resources, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan in Kabul, Afghanistan, while deployed from US Special Operations Command, MacDill AFB, FL. He is a two-time squadron commander and has served in operational comptroller positions at the wing, center, MAJCOM, Air Staff, and joint levels.*



# Merging Bucks and Boom in the Pacific



by Capt Vanessa Gomez and SSgt Inna Lvova, 353 SOG/FM

We have all heard and joined in on the various Comptroller war cries, “No bucks, No boom!” and “No Money, No Mission!” Both are true, but still, there are times when financial management capabilities are not integrated with operational requirements when it comes to hands-on experience in the field. The 353rd Special Operations Group (353 SOG) located at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan ensures all mission commanders understand just how true those war cries are and how critical a financial advisor is amid larger operations.

The 353 SOG is the sole Air Force Special Operations unit in the Pacific Theater, which means our financial management team manages the largest area of responsibility, spanning 105 million square miles. The 353 SOG enables the United States’ national security priorities across the Asia-Pacific area of responsibility through multiple Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) exercises. Using a multitude of financial management capabilities, the 353 SOG FM provides financial expertise in every aspect of each exercise. To help shape and mold logistics requirements before teams arrive in-country, the 353 SOG team has boots on the ground to streamline operations as the exercise paying agent or field ordering officer (FOO).



SSgt Lvova participates in .50 cal training with 320 STS during JCET Teak Knife



SSgt Lvova at Rodriguez Range, Korea as the FOO for JCET Teak Knife participated in weapons training exercises, which included .50 caliber and MK-19 assembly and disassembly, Humvee operations, and learning how to set up a special operations tactical antenna to access local NIPR and SIPR capability. Finally, the team finished training back at Osan Air Base where SSgt Lvova procured vital visual aids used to facilitate airfield training before the team was picked up by home station MC-130J Commando II aircraft, flown by the 17th Special Operations Squadron.

SSgt Inna Lvova was the most recent financial expert to participate in JCET Teak Knife, a training exercise in South Korea, as the FOO. She joined the 320th Special Tactics Squadron to enable combat controllers to hone and maintain critical qualifications, while working with their South Korean counterparts. SSgt Lvova spent five days between Seoul and Osan Air Base with the advanced echelon team procuring communications equipment, which was vital after the team received news of a North Korean provocation. She joined the main body as they departed for Rodriguez Training Range and spent five days in field conditions in temperatures as cold as 10 degrees Fahrenheit. During the exercise, SSgt Lvova

SSgt Lvova’s experience with fiscal law guidelines allowed her to expertly advise the mission Commander to effectively and efficiently procure necessary requirements. JCET Teak Knife was highly successful and allowed for future joint training with one of the 353 SOG’s key partners in the Pacific. It also affirmed the comptroller motto, “No Bucks, No Boom!” 

## About the Authors

*Capt Vanessa Gomez is currently assigned as the Comptroller for 353d Special Operations Group at Kadena AB, Japan. SSgt Inna Lvova is currently assigned as the Budget Analyst for 353d Special Operations Group at Kadena AB, Japan.*

# DEAMS Customer Support Division (CSD) – Working for You

by Mr. Benjamin Douglas, SAF/FMF DEAMS



## A change as significant as the Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System (DEAMS) can be met with resistance.

Inherently, people tend to resist change if they have not been adequately informed about it or prepared for it; in fact, most often, it is a lack of awareness and understanding of the need that causes the greatest amount of resistance. For people to change, they must understand what is changing and the compelling reason for the change, and also be able and willing to make change happen. The DEAMS Functional Management Office (FMO) has developed a few ways to help system users along their journey with DEAMS.



Fostering a clear communication exchange between the FMO and the users has helped to increase understanding of the system. With the development of the DEAMS Deployment Outreach Portal (<http://go.usa.gov/WPqQ>), users can remain engaged with access to our “one-stop shop for all things DEAMS.” Users can benefit from a wide array of training guides and job aids, provide feedback in Lessons Learned, complete customer surveys, participate in monthly DEAMS Users Forums, and submit end user registration forms. The Portal is a great resource for users to educate themselves on the processes they’ll perform daily in the system. However, even with these resources, we found that problems arose that required more hands-on attention and the need for a steadfast support division became evident.

## WHAT IS THE CUSTOMER SUPPORT DIVISION?

The DEAMS Customer Support Division (CSD) was established in April 2015 to provide dedicated, continuing customer support to all DEAMS deployed locations. The concept behind the DEAMS CSD originated from a recommendation made by current users who identified a gap between the initial deployment support provided by the DEAMS FMO and the day-to-day DEAMS customer support following go-live. The DEAMS CSD fills that gap by providing cradle-to-grave DEAMS customer support and ensuring a successful transition to the new accounting system.

As part of the CSD, the DEAMS Help Desk assists with account management (e.g. changing roles or responsibilities, or adding new users), helps troubleshoot problems, and provides guidance about process or system transactions. End users should contact the DEAMS Help Desk as a first line of support whenever they encounter system issues. For functional questions, users can contact their FMA or regional SME.

## HOW DOES THE HELP DESK PROCESS WORK?

When an end user calls in an issue, the Help Desk creates a ticket and provides the number to the customer to facilitate tracking and resolution. Issues are escalated to subject matter experts (SME) when an issue cannot be resolved during the initial contact. SMEs provide advanced analysis assistance and may identify workarounds to facilitate getting transactions completed while a permanent solution is being investigated. Once the SME identifies a permanent solution, the end user is contacted for resolution. As needed, SMEs provide recommendations to executive leadership for system updates and to articulate requirements during the DEAMS Governance Process.

When contacting the Help Desk, be prepared to provide basic contact information such as your name, email, phone number, and installation. Also expect to provide the following: detailed description of the issue, impact to operations, screenshots (if applicable), volume of work affected, and workarounds implemented to avoid or resolve the issue (if applicable). The more information given to the Help Desk will result in a quicker, more detailed resolution. ➤

# DEAMS Customer Support Division (CSD) – Working for You (cont.)



Ongoing Help Desk and SME support enables the end user to complete processes in DEAMS to accomplish their assigned duties and supports the DEAMS Governance Process

Help Desk	CSD SME Support	DRB & FRRB	CCB & ECCB
Initial Contract	Level I	Level I – As Required	Level I – As Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide front-line customer support for issues and concerns with the system</li> <li>• Create ticket and provide number to customer to track issue to completion</li> <li>• Escalate issues to Level I CSD SME support as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advanced analysis assistance when Help Desk support is unable to solve issue</li> <li>• Identify workarounds and system update recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate requirements through the first two phases of the DEAMS Governance Process                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Deficiency Review Board (DRB)</li> <li>– Functional Requirements Review Board (FRRB)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional information (as required) through the last two phases of the DEAMS Governance Process                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Configuration Control Board (CCB)</li> <li>– Executive Change Control Board (ECCB)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
User Support		Governance Support	

*Note: After the requirement is approved for action by FRRB, the DEAMS FMO and PMO are responsible for the remainder of the governance process*

## HERE FOR YOU

The DEAMS Help Desk provides ongoing sustainment technical support via phone (DSN 787-4377 or commercial 937-257-4377) and email ([DEAMS.HELPDESK@us.af.mil](mailto:DEAMS.HELPDESK@us.af.mil)). The DEAMS Help Desk also publishes real-time system notifications through the DEAMS Outreach Portal. A member of the CSD provides regular tips and tricks during monthly DEAMS Users Forums which are open to current and future DEAMS users.

The Help Desk is available to provide world-class customer support Monday-Friday 0700 to 1900 ET, and Saturday 0800 to 1600 ET. 

## About the Author

*Mr. Benjamin Douglas is the Communication and Multimedia Specialist for the DEAMS Organizational Change Management team located at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio.*

## Share Your “Fabric of FM” Story!

How did you come to FM? Where did you grow up? What decisions did you make that led you to become a thread in the “Fabric of FM”? Our backgrounds and experiences shape us and allow each one of us to bring a unique perspective to achieving our mission. There is so much we can learn from each other, so now is your chance to tell your story and help all of us broaden our view of the FM community.

Each month, we will feature an FMer’s story as part of “The Fabric of FM,” an ongoing series of articles. If you would like to share how you came to FM, please submit a ~500- or ~900-word article to Ms. Catherine Alexandrow at [catherine.n.alexandrow.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:catherine.n.alexandrow.ctr@mail.mil).





# A People's Guide to the Federal Budget

by The National Priorities Project

Reviewed by: Maj Jessi Schaefer, SAF/FMBP


With every new assignment, I come across a group of colleagues outside of the financial management career field who sincerely want to understand the federal budget business. Until now, I've clumsily attempted to walk each of them through an extremely complex, and often dry, topic. However, I now have the assistance of a well-written book, **A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO THE FEDERAL BUDGET**.

The National Priorities Project took on the arduous task of explaining, **in plain English**, how the federal budgeting process really works and why it is important for Americans to educate themselves on the process. Understanding the fundamentals and differences of income and outlays, appropriations and treasury disbursements, and mandatory and discretionary spending is an economic and social imperative in a post-sequester world defined by the passing of the 2011 Budget Control Act (BCA).

**A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO THE FEDERAL BUDGET** opens with a short explanation of why Americans need to care about the federal budget process (**it's taxpayers' money**), definitions of important budget terms, and a brief history of how the federal budget grew over time as a result of government involvement in economic and social issues (the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Great Society). As government involvement in American's lives grew, the federal budget increased, as did the number of federal oversight agencies. The book then analyzes more complex topics. These include the basic building blocks of our nation's financial position, such as the nation's income source (print money, debt, or taxes), what causes a disbursement from the Treasury (mandatory spending, appropriations, interest payments), and what expenditures exhaust the highest percentage of federal spending (in 2011, social security—32%, Medicare/health—23%, and the military—20%).

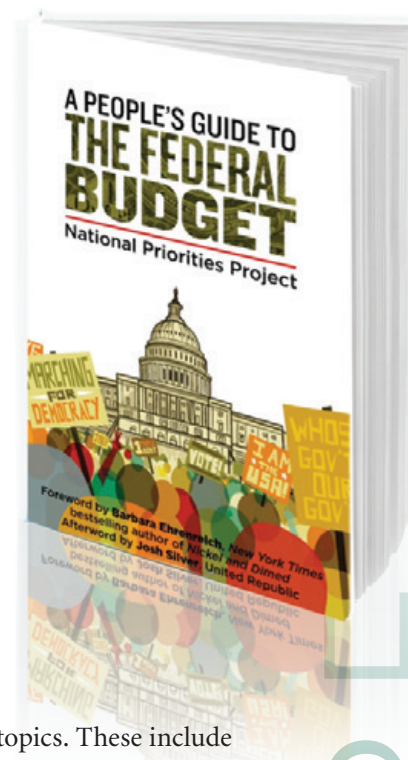
The relevance to federal financial managers is revealed when where the authors explore our nation's recent interest in the federal debt. After explaining the nation's total debt and how it came to pass, the authors quickly bridge to the nation's debt crisis in 2010. With the rise of the Tea Party movement, Congress responded to the nation's will to decrease debt by passing the 2011 BCA. The BCA laid out a plan to reduce the federal budget or face the consequences of mandated, across-the-board budget reductions for all federal agencies—aka **sequestration**. In 2013, when our political leaders could not agree on how to meet the BCA mandates, our nation faced the wrath of sequestration which resulted in immediate and deep budget reductions.

Political affiliations aside, the National Priorities Project successfully laid the groundwork in for all readers to ask themselves just how much the country gained reducing federal debt when sequestration only targeted 38% of the total budget (discretionary spending). While the math problem is not easily solved, the book implies it won't be solved by considering only 38% of the total equation. In this case, the writers gently infer decreases in mandatory spending must also occur before our nation can look forward to substantial reduction in debt.

This book is an excellent source of information on how our nation's budgetary process works. Just be aware, the last chapter drives toward a political agenda and does not add a significant value for a reader only interested in the federal budget process. However, in the end, any reader of this book will walk away a more educated citizen. 

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Maj Jessi Schaefer is currently the Chief of Corporate Branch for the Air Force Budget and Programs Division (SAF/FMBP). She has 15 years of financial management experience at the base, operational and strategic levels, both in garrison and deployed environments.*





## DEAMS Training Webinars – Sign up for an April Session!

The Financial Systems Training team announced the DEAMS webinar April schedule. Please sign up through FM DLC under the “Webinars” tab. If you have any questions, please contact the team at [saf.fmpaffso.training@us.af.mil](mailto:saf.fmpaffso.training@us.af.mil).

5 Apr – DEAMS Project Billing User (PBU)	1100-1300 hrs EST
7 Apr – DEAMS Reports	1100-1300 hrs EST
12 Apr – DEAMS Reports	1100-1300 hrs EST
13 Apr – DEAMS Intro Course	1300-1500 hrs EST
14 Apr – DEAMS Travel Course	1300-1500 hrs EST
19 Apr – DEAMS PBU	1100-1300 hrs EST
20 Apr – DEAMS Funds Loading and Certification	1300-1500 hrs EST
21 Apr – DEAMS GPC/4009	1300-1500 hrs EST
26 Apr – DEAMS Forms Type I (AF 9 and FM 4009)	1300-1500 hrs EST
28 Apr – DEAMS Intro Course	1300-1500 hrs EST



## DEAMS Training Webinars – Tips for Success

### Accessing DEAMS Component Billing System

Is your line of accounting (LoA) being obligated for an MTA bill? Are you looking to view/validate traveler info to ensure your LoA should be charged? Look no further than the DEAMS Component Billing System (DCBS). To gain access the DCBS, users should go to DCBS (email team below for the link) and complete the registration form. You will also be required to provide a DD Form 2875 to the DCBS Help Desk for access.

Additional information on this topic is available via the DEAMS Outreach Portal >Stay Involved >DEAMS Monthly Users Forum >2015 Forums >2015-02 Feb DEAMS Monthly Users Forum.

Email [SAF.FMPDEAMS.ChangeManagement@us.af.mil](mailto:SAF.FMPDEAMS.ChangeManagement@us.af.mil) for links to the DCBS or the outreach portal.

### Closeout Preparations

Don't wait until September to start cleaning your books. As we become auditable we will see an increase in the required supporting documentation required to process work. This can result in more time required to complete work, regardless of the system you use. So take advantage of the time you have now. At a minimum you should make sure your reimbursable accounts are current, check the DFAS E-portal to make sure JVs/1081s are not on hold for missing paperwork, and validate your ODL is current. A little work now will make your closeout a lot smoother. For additional information and answers to your questions, please visit us at the DEAMS Group on MilBook.